

Apply for a license to practice as a psychotherapist with a professional qualification from the EU/EEA/Switzerland

Would you like to work as a psychotherapist in Germany? Then you need a license to practice. You can also obtain a license to practice with a foreign professional qualification. To do so, you must have your professional qualification recognized.

Competent Department

- [Die Senatorin für Gesundheit, Frauen und Verbraucherschutz | Referat 20 - Berufe im Gesundheitswesen](#)

Basic information

The profession of psychotherapist is regulated in Germany. This means that in order to work as a psychotherapist in Germany without any restrictions, you need a license to practice. Approbation is the state license to practice the profession. This means that you are not allowed to work independently as a psychotherapist without a license to practice. You can also obtain a license to practice in Germany with a professional qualification from a country in the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

In order to obtain a license to practice, you must have your foreign professional qualification recognized. In the recognition procedure, the competent authority compares your professional qualification with the German professional qualification and checks the equivalence. The equivalence of the professional qualification is an important prerequisite for obtaining a license to practice.

In addition to the equivalence of the professional qualification, you must also meet other requirements for the license to be issued. Further requirements are, for example, sufficient German language skills and health suitability.

If your professional qualification does not originate from the EU, the EEA or Switzerland, other regulations apply.

In principle, you can also apply for the procedure from abroad.

Requirements

- You have a professional qualification as a psychotherapist from the EU, the EEA or Switzerland.
- You want to work as a psychotherapist in Germany.
- You can provide proof of competence in the federal state of Bremen.
- Personal suitability: You are reliable to work as a psychotherapist and have no criminal record.
- Health suitability: You are mentally and physically fit to work as a psychotherapist.
- You have German language skills at the required level. This is usually general language skills at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and technical language skills at level C2.

Procedure

Application

You submit an application for a license to practice as a psychotherapist to the competent authority. The application must be submitted electronically. The original documents must be presented at a personal appointment. The competent authority will then check whether your training corresponds to the German training and whether all other requirements have been met. Approval can only be granted if your training from abroad is equivalent to the German training.

Examination of equivalence

The competent authority compares your professional qualification from abroad with the German professional qualification. The competent authority will check whether your professional qualification is equivalent. The professional qualification is equivalent if there are no significant differences between your foreign professional qualification and the German professional qualification.

Possible results of the examination

If your professional qualification is equivalent, your foreign professional qualification will be recognized. The authority can confirm the result in writing. You must still meet the other requirements and provide proof of your language skills. You will then be granted a license to practice as a psychotherapist.

Are there any significant differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification? You may be able to compensate for the differences through your professional experience, other knowledge or skills (lifelong learning). You must provide evidence of your professional experience. Knowledge and skills must be certified by an authority in the country in which you acquired the knowledge or skills.

However, it is possible that the essential differences cannot be compensated for by this knowledge. You may then not work as a psychotherapist in Germany.

The competent authority will inform you of the significant differences and why you cannot compensate for the significant differences through your professional practice. The decision of the competent authority will also state the level of your training and the level required in Germany.

Compensatory measures

You can take a compensatory measure to make up for the substantial differences.

There are various compensation measures:

- Adaptation course: the adaptation course lasts a maximum of 3 years.
- Aptitude test: In the aptitude test, only those areas in which significant differences have been identified are tested. The aptitude test is an oral-practical case test.

You can choose between an adaptation period or an aptitude test.

If you successfully complete the compensation measure and meet all other requirements, you will be licensed as a psychotherapist.

Legal bases

- [§ 1 Abs. 1, § 2, § 12 Psychotherapeutengesetz](#)
- [§ 61 ff. Approbationsordnung für Psychotherapeutinnen und Psychotherapeuten](#)

More information

Partial access to the profession for professional qualifications from the EU, the EEA or Switzerland:

Your professional qualification is not equivalent and there is only a partial match with the German professional qualification? The activity can be objectively separated from the other activities of a psychotherapist? Then you may be able to work in the profession with partial access to the profession. However, with partial access to the profession, you may not carry out all activities in the profession. You may then only carry out the activities for which you are qualified through your training.

There are certain requirements for a partial professional license:

- You can work in this profession with your professional qualification in your country of training.
- Your professional qualification only partially corresponds to the German professional qualification. The differences to the German professional qualification relate to certain activities that are important for the profession in Germany.

- Your professional qualification must correspond to a specific activity of the professional qualification in Germany.
- Health aptitude
- Personal aptitude
- German language skills: You must have the German language skills required for partial access to the profession.

You apply for partial access to the profession at the competent authority.

Temporary professional license

With a temporary professional license, you can work for a limited period of time without a license to practice. With a temporary professional permit, you may work under the supervision of a person with a license to practice. You may then only be allowed to carry out activities in a specific area of work. You must meet the following requirements for the temporary work permit:

- Proof of your professional qualification
- Health suitability
- Personal aptitude
- German language skills: You must provide proof of the German language skills required to exercise the profession within the scope of the professional license.

You can apply for a temporary professional license from the competent authority.

You may not apply for a temporary professional license if you have also applied for a license to practice.

Freedom to provide services

Do you only want to offer services in Germany occasionally and for a short period of time? Then you do not usually need a state permit. You must fulfill these requirements:

- You must be established in another EU, EEA or Swiss state.
- You must provide proof of your professional qualification.
- You must notify the competent authority of your activity in writing.

The competent authority will inform you.

Notification of equivalence

The equivalence assessment (recognition procedure) can also take place during the licensing procedure. You can apply for a separate decision on the result of the examination.

Procedure for ethnic German repatriates

As a late repatriate, you can go through the recognition procedure either in accordance with the laws mentioned here or in accordance with the Federal Expellees Act. You can decide for yourself. The responsible office will advise you which procedure is right for you.

Legal remedy

You can take legal action against the decision of the competent authority within a certain period of time (for example, by lodging an objection). The decision will then be reviewed. Details can be found in the information on legal remedies at the end of your decision. We recommend that you first speak to the responsible office before taking legal action against the decision.

What deadlines must be paid attention to?

There is no deadline.

Sometimes documents are still missing from the procedure. The responsible office will then inform you by when you must submit the documents. This may prolong the procedure.

How long does it take to process

Depending on the individual case.

What are the costs?

The responsible office will inform you of the costs. The costs generally depend on the time and effort required for processing.

Additional costs may be incurred (e.g. for translations or notarizations). These costs vary from case to case.